

grades. He is 13 now, and he is doing better. He has worked hard and made progress. But despite his efforts, he is still struggling to catch up with his classmates because habits of social promotion shuffled him forward in a system before he was ready.

If we expect our students to be able to compete in the global workforce, then we must provide them with the proper learning tools. Part of that answer lies in providing technology and the means to use it. Another part lies in better teacher training and higher teacher pay. Another part lies in holding failing schools accountable, and giving parents greater control over where and how education dollars are spent. And another part lies in more equitable funding. Together these individual answers create a solution.

The 107th Congress has a unique opportunity to fundamentally change the Federal Government's role in education. I am not satisfied with the status quo, and neither are Nevada parents. After 36 years, the system is ripe for change. On behalf of Nevada families, I intend to press for that change.

I know that Nevadans have a fighting spirit to make our schools the best in the country—a fighting spirit that has been passed on, starting with our settlers, from one generation to the next. Our battle-born State was formed by facing up to difficult challenges, and we are up for the challenge of making sure that when it comes to education, no child is left behind.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I thank the Senator from Nevada.

Under the previous order, the senior Senator from Nevada, Mr. REID, is recognized for 5 minutes.

COMMENDING SENATOR ENSIGN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, for more than 30 years, Senator Richard Bryan and I served together in various public offices. We took the bar together. We became inseparable friends. We were known in Nevada—and are still known—as the “Gold Dust Twins.” So when Senator Bryan decided to retire, it was a tremendous personal blow to me. I really miss Richard.

But in life you move on. I feel so fortunate to be able to serve with JOHN ENSIGN. JOHN and I have known each other for a long time. His family, prior to 1998, were some of my biggest supporters. In 1998, of course, we ran against each other. It was an extremely close race, one of the closest races in the history of the State of Nevada, and, of course, in the history of the country.

It is easy to be gracious when you win; it is not so easy when you lose. It shows the goodness of a person as to how they are able to take defeat. JOHN ENSIGN could write a book on how people who suffer adversity should react.

Twenty-four years prior to that race between REID and ENSIGN, I lost a very close race in the State of Nevada. I

didn't handle it nearly as well as JOHN ENSIGN handled his loss. I only wish I had handled the loss in 1974 the way JOHN ENSIGN did in 1998. To his credit, not only did he handle it, as my father would say, “as a man,” he handled it extremely well. Not only that, he came back and 2 years later was elected to the Senate. One reason he was elected as easily as he was is how he handled the loss in 1998.

I am happy to be on the floor today at the time of the maiden speech of the junior Senator from the State of Nevada. I am sure his parents were watching on C-SPAN, and I know how proud they are. His father is a very quiet man. He goes to very few public functions. When he does, he is easy to find because he is always back someplace, usually alone, watching his son. His mother is more in the mix of things, but I am sure they were watching this morning as their son delivered his first speech on the Senate floor. I am sure they are very proud of JOHN, as they should be. He has been a real good son.

He is well educated. He is a doctor of veterinary medicine. He is someone who has been a successful businessman, both in the veterinary field and also in the business field. More important than that, JOHN ENSIGN has something his parents are more proud of than how he has succeeded in his professional public life. They are more proud of how he succeeded in his personal life. His wife Darlene and he have been extraordinary parents. I called JOHN at home not long ago and Darlene took the phone. I said: Could I speak to JOHN; what is he doing? She said: He is on the bed playing with the kids. That is what dads are supposed to be doing.

Mr. President, Mayor LaGuardia in New York City started a saying that we all use now: There is no Democratic or Republican way of cleaning the streets. That is true. In that same vein, there is no Democratic or Republican way of handling the problems that come to us in the State of Nevada, as they come to people in the State of Virginia. There is no strictly Democratic or Republican way of fixing the problems in the State of Nevada.

JOHN ENSIGN and I know that. That is why as soon as the election was over this past November he and I got together and said that we were going to set an example for the people of the State of Nevada. Everyone knew of the friendship of Richard Bryan and HARRY REID, but people were doubtful how HARRY REID and JOHN ENSIGN could represent the State of Nevada. Were we simply going to cancel each other's votes and be mean spirited about how we reacted to each other?

We were not going to vote the same way all the time, but we decided we would be gentlemen in the way that we handled the problems of the people of the State of Nevada. We believed there was no reason we couldn't become friends, just as HARRY REID and Richard Bryan were friends. While we are only a few months into this relation-

ship, we both feel very good about it. We are on the road to setting an example for having the best bipartisan relationship in the history of the State of Nevada. We are going to try to do that. We vow to work closely together to protect the interests of our home State and protect the interests of bipartisan-

ship. We are here now. The Senate is 50/50. It is not going to stay that way. We don't know how much longer, whether the Democrats are going to control the Senate or the Republicans. Regardless of that, ENSIGN and REID are going to work together and have a good bipartisan relationship.

I ask unanimous consent to speak for 2 additional minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Today Senator ENSIGN in his maiden speech talked about substantive issues. These are substantive issues he has talked about for a number of years. He feels strongly about education and other matters. I am very proud of his first speech. I can remember my first Senate speech. Presiding over the Senate that day was Senator David Pryor of Arkansas. I gave a speech on the Taxpayers' Bill of Rights. That is now law. I was very fortunate the man that ran the subcommittee that had jurisdiction over this issue liked what I said. CHUCK GRASSLEY was listening. He was also interested in this issue. Immediately I got bipartisan support for the legislation, and it became law.

I salute my friend JOHN ENSIGN for his first speech. I look forward to many years of service to the State of Nevada by JOHN ENSIGN. I look forward to many years of friendship between JOHN ENSIGN and HARRY REID.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I say to my good friend from Nevada—I call him that, too—he has welcomed me to the Senate. He has shown me the ropes. As he discussed, we are going to work for the people of the State of Nevada because there are a lot of issues that affect our State that are very unique to it. They are not Republican or Democratic issues. We have agreed to disagree on issues that we feel strongly about that are national issues, and that is fine. We hope to also set an example for the rest of the Senate of how one can agree or not agree but not be disagreeable.

I thank the senior Senator from Nevada. He is representing our State in the tremendous position he is in today. We in Nevada are all very proud of him. I thank Mr. REID for attending my maiden speech on the floor. I look forward to many great years of working together.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, as

amended, the time until 11:17 shall be under the control of the Senator from Wyoming, Mr. THOMAS.

ENERGY POLICY

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I thank the Senators from Nevada for their conversation. Certainly we have a lot of things in common with Nevada, mostly public lands. We don't have the gambling revenue, however.

I rise to speak a few moments today on energy and energy policy. Certainly, this is one of the issues President Bush has talked about, and we have talked about it for some time in the Congress, the lack of a policy on energy. The President has asked Vice President CHENEY to come up with some ideas with regard to energy and an energy policy. I believe he is going to do that within the next month. I look forward to that.

One of the important and interesting aspects of this working group Vice President CHENEY has put together is that it involves the directors of several agencies. That is extremely important. What we thought is, we have an agency called the Department of Energy, which is fine, but much of what is done with respect to energy is done in some other agencies, such as Interior, EPA, and Agriculture. It is extremely important that we have a high level group such as this that will bring together the differences that have evolved out of the various agencies.

We also are seeking to reactivate and continually activate an oil and gas forum in the Senate for those States that have particular interests in the production aspect of oil and gas and fuel. Obviously, everyone has an interest in it. No one pays much attention to it when gas is \$1 or \$1.10 a gallon. When it gets to be \$1.90, there is suddenly a lot of interest in it. I understand that. Even in our State of Wyoming, where we are maybe the energy center of the country our natural gas prices have gone up, for heating, of course, in the wintertime. And then the California situation certainly has brought attention to it as well.

So I think even though we have sought to do this over the last several years, it is time we really focused in on having a national energy policy. That will give some vision to what we expect and want to do with regard to energy and, indeed, how we would do that. It is interesting; I guess I wasn't aware of the impact high-tech has had on the electricity consumption in California. You don't think of this computer sitting in front of you, Mr. President, which is using a lot of energy. But there are so many that are turned on that it has, indeed, had an impact.

What do we need to do with the energy policy? I guess we ought to begin by saying, what do we want, expect, and need in terms of energy for our economy, our families, our communities, to have the kind of life we want to have? I think then we look at that

demand situation. Of course, we have to take a look at how we are going to supply those needs.

We are currently about 56-percent dependent on foreign sources for our Nation's supply of oil. It cost more than \$100 billion last year to bring those things here. Our dependence has increased over the years. It was about 36 percent in 1973 during the Arab oil embargo and 46 percent during Desert Storm. Now DOE projects that it will be about 65 percent by the year 2020—our dependency on foreign sources of energy—unless we change our situation.

So coupled with producing the product, I think there are some other things that each of us would like to see. We have to do something with the costs, see if we can level out costs. That is particularly important to us, really, those of us who are in the production field. I think a year ago the wellhead price of natural gas was about \$1.50, and of course that wasn't enough to even offset the costs. You had a little exploration, a little production, and really our economy in those areas was kind of down, and all of a sudden it was like \$9. So now there is a rush. We tend to have energy boom-and-bust cycles—not only for consumers but for producers and for communities around the country. How can we level that out some?

Diversity: I think we have to look at diversity. Certainly, there are a number of sources of energy. Some are used more than others. I think we need to have diversity.

The environment: As we produce domestically, obviously, we need to take into account very seriously the protection of the environment. There are new ways being discovered all the time as to how to do it. There is horizontal drilling where you can reach out over thousands of square miles with a very small footprint.

Conservation: As we look at that, there are ways in which we can use energy more efficiently than in the past.

So I hope we can do that on domestic production. We can do it, of course, in a number of ways. One of the ways, I am sure, that is most important is access. We were just listening to the Senator from Nevada and 87 percent of Nevada belongs to the Federal Government. Fifty percent belongs to the Federal Government in my State of Wyoming. So many of the lands where there is access and there are designs for multiple use—we haven't had the access to be able to explore and produce in these natural resource areas. Access is something that is very important to be able to do that. I suspect we will have to take a look at some incentives, whether they be tax incentives or other kinds of incentives, to urge people to produce, of course. One of them that is always talked about that has a certain amount of merit is a tax reduction for small production wells. Wells get to the point that it is not profitable to produce

them but there is a good deal of resource there. So to encourage them to do that would be useful, I am sure.

I mentioned diversity. Gas is a great resource, and we are going to use a great deal of it. That is the problem we have, really, out in California. Of course, it is electricity, but to generate electricity, or want to, with gas. So you have to get gas there. But gas has a lot of opportunities to be used in many ways. I guess you could ask yourself, from a policy standpoint, should we be using gas almost exclusively in electricity generation when we could be using coal, for example, of which we have great reserves, and for stationary production; perhaps that is an alternative we ought to consider.

We want to be certain that coal will be clean fuel; and it is clean now, but it can be even cleaner if we use some research and continue to work at doing CO₂ and SO₂ and doing some things that we can do there.

Hydro: In the past several years, we have been in a situation where people were seeking to reduce the number of dams that were there and take away the production we have now. Hydro is a very efficient and, obviously, very clean fuel source. We can do that. I mentioned coal. Coal is one of our greatest resources, and we can do much with that as well.

Nuclear: There is a good deal more interest in doing nuclear things. I think in Illinois, right now, nuclear plants produce 40 or 50 percent of the electricity. Now we have to find something to do with nuclear waste. We haven't yet finished our Yucca Mountain proposition or some other things. Nor do we use it as they do in Europe, where they recycle and a great deal of their generation is done by nuclear. It is the cleanest in terms of air quality, as I understand it.

Renewables: We have some opportunities to increase the efficiency and make more competitive the cost of renewables, whether they be wind, air, sun, whatever. I think that is something we are looking forward to in the future.

In addition to that, the markets for energy, of course, are not generally where the energy is produced, so you have to move it. Part of the problem is, in California, nobody really wanted to build transmission lines. They didn't want to provide rights of way to move fuel. Well, if you are going to have fuel, you have to move it there. Are there better ways perhaps to do it? Maybe so.

I think one of the things we want to look at here, because it is interstate movement, is an electric transmission grid, so that there is an opportunity to move electricity perhaps even from Wyoming to California and that can be done.

So there are a lot of things that need to be done. I think they need to be set out, and we need to balance protection of the environment. Obviously, nobody wants to overlook that. At the same time, you can make it so restrictive